Prime Minister declared "India is a nuclear weapon State. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant."

(c) and (d) India's position on the CTBT was articulated by the Prime Minister in the UN General Assembly in September 1998 and in Parliament in December 1998. This was reiterated by the External Affairs Minister at the UN General Assembly in September 1999. The priority of our meeting the country's national security concerns having been addressed, the government believes that we now need to convey reassurance to the international community and, in this regard, desires to develop a national consensus. That remains the Government's position.

Diplomatic relation with Afghanistan

47. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the nature of cooperation extended by Afghan Government to resolve the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 by the militants to Kandahar;

(b) whether in the wake of its cooperation, the Afghan Government have asked for diplomatic relations between the two countries; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of the Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Taliban authorities in Kandahar who permitted the hijacked Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to land at Kandahar Airport, provided food and other facilities to the passengers and the aircraft. While adopting an attitude of correct facilitators, they consistently had their sympathies with the hijackers and their other supporters.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.